



By TED LEWIS

Washington, July 16.—Morale troubles in the Pentagon, State Department or Central Intelligence Agency are bad business at any time, but when they are rife during a cold war crisis of the dimensions of Berlin an expression of bitter, angry alarm appears justified.

This is particularly so when the morale problem afflicts not just one, but all three of these establishments, each of which has vital functions to perform in connection with the Berlin war threat.

The Defense Department is muddled up because the Joint Chiefs of Staff find their status of principal military advisers to the President uncertain, if not challenged. This is because President Kennedy put Gen. Maxwell Taylor in the White House with the fuzzy title of "military representative of the President."

The State Department is in a worse mess. Its policy-making status is confused because the President is not only acting as his own Secretary of State, but has foreign policy advisers on his own payroll.

The Central Intelligence Agency's similar troubles go back to the morale-shattering Cuban invasion fiasco, which kicked off two Presidential-ordered investigations. Despite the probes, the future status of the CIA is still uncertain, although it is expected to be shrunk in size and its global hush-hush activities limited strictly to intelligence, not policy-making.

The morale problem in the Pentagon alone would keep thousands of psychiatrists' couches occupied. It permeates from the higher echelons down to all secondary levels of both the military and civilian high commands.

What is the basic reason for the foulup?

It is because the President has a dim view of any advice he gets from Gen. Lyman Lemnitzer, chairman of the Joint Chiefs. This traces back to Cuba. Kennedy believes Lemnitzer was way off in his estimate of invasion military needs.

So, instead of war plans of the Joint Chiefs being accepted without question on the Berlin crisis, the President kicked around this problem. What does Gen. Taylor think? What does former Secretary of State Dean Acheson think?

A Question of Ferment vs. Morale

The authoritative Army Navy Air Force Journal revealed in its current issue that there had been still another reported "slighting" of the Joint Chiefs on the Berlin planning matter.

It said the President ordered "the formulation of new plans. For meeting the renewed Soviet threats to Berlin" after conferring at Hyannisport July 8 with Gen. Taylor, Secretary of State Rusk and Secretary of Defense McNamara.

In response to this latest order, Defense Secretary McNamara, according to the Journal, went directly to the civilian heads of the three services to get the "new plans," bypassing "his own military advisers, the Joint Chiefs of Staff organization, who had submitted recommendations earlier and who were continuing to work on the problem."

This sort of confusion breeds morale problems, although President Kennedy considers what he calls "ferment" can be a good way to get useful results. What happens to morale in the process is a question he has yet to be asked.



Chester Bowles
On the way out?

State Department Is Sunk Even Deeper

In the State Department, the morale problem is even more widespread than in the Pentagon. Undersecretary of State Chester Bowles is "on his way out," according to "reliable reports." This will help a little, but the trouble is far more deep-seated, involving the failure of Rusk to come up with any firm policy ideas on his own, simply operating as an agent to carry out the President's policies—and waiting around long weeks until Kennedy makes up his mind.

It is true that the White House has been urging Rusk to take a stronger lead. But at the same time, it has tried to keep its finger on everything. McGeorge Bundy, the White House foreign policy adviser, along with Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and Walt Rostow, is hip-deep in State Department affairs, although insisting they go to great pains to see that Secretary Rusk's toes are not stepped on.

One high State Department official tells us he not only has to send Bundy stuff for his information but for his approval. The White House is constantly peppering the State Department for memos on everything, begging down staff work and cluttering up lines of authority.

Many experts think, and properly, that the White House should review and pass on recommendations, etc., and not get down into the muck and mire of all the preliminary discussions, which it is really not equipped to do.

Feeling of Hopelessness on Higher Levels

The greatest confusion is among the higher ups at the State Department—a feeling that lines of authority, guidance, etc., are in such a tangle that very little can be done without far too much confusion and effort.

Part of this is due to: (1) the chaotic staff situation at the White House; (2) the newness of many key men in the White House and State Department to their jobs; (3) the fact that some key people were appointed by Kennedy, rather than Rusk, and are not really working as part of a team (for example, Bowles); (4) Rusk's own unwillingness so far to exert a strong lead in some areas.

This estimate of what is the cause of the State Department's morale problem comes from career officers themselves. They finally have begun, in desperation, to leak plenty about their troubles.

One result was that the pro-Administration Washington Post & Times-Herald decided that the situation warranted a spelling out of what's the matter in the State Department.

"Responsible persons inside the department," said the Post & Times-Herald report, "variously describe the problem as 'confusion,' 'uncertainty,' 'growing pains,' or 'transition troubles.'"